

Message Text

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67

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-10

NSAE-00 PA-02 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 DODE-00 H-02 NSC-05 MC-02 /082 W

----- 106222

R 221200Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6488

INFO COMICEDEFOR

CINCLANT

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USNATO 1466

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 0998

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, MOPS, IC

SUBJECT: STILL FURTHER TO "UNDERWATER SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM"

REF: REYKJAVIK 0990

TRYING HARD TO KEEP ALIVE A STORY WHICH HAS ATTRACTED LITTLE ATTENTION IN DULL SUMMER SEASON, DAILY DAGBLADID CARRIED ANOTHER ARTICLE JULY 20 ON THE "UNDERWATER SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM." UNDER HEADLINE, "WHAT WERE THE SHIPS DOING? IT WAS A MILITARY SECRET," DAGBLADID SAID:

"THE SHIPS WERE THERE DOING REPAIRS TO A PART OF THE DEFENSE SYSTEM OF ICELAND. THAT IS ALL I CAN SAY,' REPLIED MATSON, THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEFENSE FORCE AT KEFLAVIK. 'THE CREWS WERE WORKING THERE AT MAINTENANCE AND DIVING.' MATSON COULD NOT SAY WHAT KIND OF DEFENSE SYSTEM THIS WAS, HOW EXTENSIVE IT WAS, NOR WHEN IT HAD BEEN SET UP. 'IT IS A MILITARY SECRET,' HE SAID.

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IT IS KNOWN THAT TWO AMERICAN MILITARY CABLE SHIPS HAVE

BEEN CLOSE TO THE COUNTRY RECENTLY IN JUNE AND JULY. THEY HAVE BEEN MAINLY OUT OF STOKKSNES AND STAVNES. THEY WERE PROBABLY LAYING OR REPAIRING THE LISTENING CABLES OF THE DEFENSE FORCE IN THIS COUNTRY. THIS PAPER KNOWS THAT ON THE MORNING OF JUNE 8, ONE OF THE CABLE SHIPS WAS IN THE CONSERVATION ZONE AT PAPPAGRUN AT ANCHOR. CLOSE BY, A BOAT, THE DJORKER, FROM NES-KAUPSTADER HAD GOT PARTS OF A CABLE CAUGHT IN ITS FISHING GEAR. THIS PAPER INQUIRED FROM THE COAST GUARD ABOUT THOSE SHIPS SINCE THE COAST GUARD MEN HAD SAID THEY OFTEN SAW THEM HERE. THE COAST GUARD SAID THEY HAD RECEIVED A MESSAGE ABOUT THEM FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THEREFORE THEY (COAST GUARD) DID NOT LOOK FURTHER INTO IT OR MAKE ANY REPORTS ABOUT IT. THOSE SHIPS WERE JUST FROM THE DEFENSE FORCE."

IN SAME ISSUE, DABGLADID CARRIED FOLLOWING INTERVIEW:

"IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE AMERICAN ARE HERE TO DEFEND US AND WHY SHOULD THEY NOT HAVE SURVEILLANCE ON THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA AS WELL AS IN THE AIR?' SAID PALL ASGEIR TRYGGVASON, MINISTER COUNSELLOR OF THE DEFENSE DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN AN INTERVIEW WITH DAGBLADID. 'THIS CAME A LONG TIME AGO, BUT FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE LISTENING SYSTEM ARE, OF COURSE, A MILITARY SECRET.' PALL SAID ALSO THAT TREMENDOUS PROGRESS IN THE FIELD OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS WAS ONE OF THE REASONS THAT MAKING SUCH LISTENING SYSTEMS WAS POSSIBLE. 'BUT AS I SAID, THEY ARE HERE TO DEFEND THE COUNTRY AND OF COURSE WE DEMAND THAT THEY DO IT IN THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY,' PALL SAID."

MARTIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, RADAR, SURVEILLANCE, SUBMARINES, WARNING SYSTEMS, LISTENING DEVICES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976REYKJA00998
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760283-0114
From: REYKJAVIK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760732/aaaabbtf.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 REYKJAVIK 990
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2004 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <27 DEC 2004 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STILL FURTHER TO "UNDERWATER SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM"
TAGS: MARR, MOPS, IC, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006